· Janet T. Mills
GOVERNOR

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
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AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333-0001

REQUEST FOR PRESIDENTIAL DISASTER DECLARATION
GOVERNOR'S REQUEST COVER LETTER
MAJOR DISASTER OR EMERGENCY

February 16, 2023

The Honorable Joe Biden
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Through: Ms. Lori Ehrlich
Regional Administrator
FEMA Region 1
99 High Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02110

Dear Mr. President:

Under the provisions of Section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5207 (Stafford Act), and implemented by 44 CFR § 206.36, I humbly request that you declare a Major Disaster for the counties of Cumberland, Franklin, Knox, Oxford, Somerset, Waldo, and York in the state of Maine. All seven counties experienced extreme damages that have collectively exceeded the State's capabilities as a result of a major storm event between the dates of December 23, 2022, and December 24, 2022. Specifically, I am requesting Public Assistance (PA) categories A through G, and Z for the indicated counties, as well as Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funding for use statewide

Details of my request are offered in the attached Request for Presidential Disaster Declaration (OMB Control No. 1660-0009/FEMA Form 010-0-13) and the extent of damages are further supported with supplemental information. Validated damages for the event can be found in Enclosure B: Supplemental Information for Public Assistance. Further information will be provided in the coming weeks for each of the counties still undergoing the validation process, however I humbly request that all damages be used in support of the State of Maine damage threshold, to include Kennebec County which unfortunately did not successfully meet its threshold indicator. Meteorological factors and precursors for this incident have also been supplied and are described in detail in the attached National Weather Service Event Report.

ENTITY	DAMAGE THRESHOLD	DAMAGES VALIDATED	DIFFERENCE	THRESHOLD STATUS
Cumberland	$ 1,345,626	$ 476,300	$ 869,326	Assessing
Franklin	$ 130,785	$ 92,756	$ 38,029	Assessing
Kennebec	$ 548,970	$ 390,276	$ 158,694	Assessing
Knox	$ 180,295	$ 349,276	$ (168,981)	Validated
Oxford	$ 256,530	$ 285,046	$ (28,516)	Validated
Somerset	$ 224,118	$ 471,348	$ (247,230)	Validated
Waldo	$ 175,855	$ 373,233	$ (197,378)	Validated
York	$ 941,156	$ 842,145	$ 99,011	Assessing
State of Maine	$ 2,411,375	$ 3,280,380	$ (869,005)	Validated

During the early hours of December 23rd, a powerful low-pressure system rapidly developed and moved across New England. Emergency Management personnel and first responders had taken proactive measures leading up to the storm to best posture for potential flooding, road closures, power outages, warming center activations, and shelter activations. Maine Emergency Management Agency hosted a conference call with all Emergency Response Team and county partners prior to the event to include Maine's largest power providers. Maine's State Emergency Operations Center moved to a partial activation at 0930 on December 23rd, maintaining a sustained partial activation posture through 2000 on December 24th. The State Emergency Operations Center served as a support to the thirteen out of sixteen County Emergency Operations Centers that activated during the storm. Three County Emergency Management Agencies remained in an enhanced monitoring status and maintained in active communication with the state.

The Winter Storm Elliott event ultimately resulted in widespread damages formally validated as exceeding Maine's $2,411,375 damage threshold. Widespread coastal damages occurred the morning of December 23rd when wind gusts in excess of 70 mph and 2.5 ft storm surge battered Maine infrastructure, to include historical sites, during astronomical high tide. Water inundation of one to three feet occurred in many coastal communities with some water rescues being reported, and numerous communities temporarily cut-off as coastal roads became inundated around high tide. Coastal Flood Watches had been issued for the entire coast of Maine as early as Wednesday, December 21st for potential flooding on Friday December 23rd. Coastal Flood Watches were upgraded to Coastal Flood Warnings on the morning of December 22nd in preparation for the December 23rd high tide.

Precipitation moved into southern Maine during the late evening hours of December 22nd and moved across the remainder of the state into the early morning of December 23rd. The precipitation continued through the evening hours of December 23rd, then gradually ended from south to north early morning, December 24th. The heaviest rainfall fell across southern and western Maine with totals of two to four inches. Snowmelt and frozen ground cover were significant factors in the magnitude and extent of the flood damages. Overland flooding was the most prevalent cause of damage, especially where rainfall exceeded two inches. Flood watches were issued on the 21st for the entire state excluding only Aroostook County. The National Weather Service issued five areal flood warnings, one flash flood warning, seven river flood warnings, and one flood advisory through the event.

Power outages effecting 330,214 customers ultimately extended between December 23rd – December 30th, for which 906-line crews and 230-vegetative crews responded. Maine Department of Transportation dispatched twenty-five crews to respond to extensive road washouts and road closures, accumulating a total of 4,300 recovery hours. The Disaster Recovery Team was activated immediately after the event to support damage data collection across a total of eight counties for which public infrastructure damages were collectively found to exceed the State's capabilities.

On January 4th, Maine formally requested a Joint Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) for Public Assistance. On-site assessments were conducted across a total of six counties between January 9th and 13th (Cumberland, Knox, Oxford, Somerset, Waldo, and York), with virtual assessments occurring across two counties (Franklin and Kennebec) between January 17th and 18th. The statewide PDA has to date validated $3,280,380 in public infrastructure damages. That total is expected to rise as MEMA and FEMA work with county and local partners to complete the validation of damages across Cumberland, Franklin, and York counties in the coming weeks.

Validated damages from the event are currently broken down as follows; Category A (Debris Removal) was $255,449 (7.79%); Category B (Protective Measures) was $226,651 (6.91%); Category C (Roads and Bridges) was $1,755,909 (53.53%); Category D (Water Control) was $262,610 (8.01%); Category E (Buildings and Equipment) was $57,800 (1.76%); Category F (Public Utilities) was $0 (0%); and Category G (Parks and Other) $721,961 (22.01%).

All damaged infrastructure that has completed the validation process has been verified as not eligible for commercially available insurance coverage, and therefore, all repair costs must be covered by local government taxpayers if Federal assistance is not obtained. At this time, the State and four participating counties have successfully met their respective per capita thresholds and we believe that three additional counties will be validated as meeting their respective thresholds in the coming weeks. I once again humbly request that you declare a Major Disaster for the counties of Cumberland, Franklin, Knox, Oxford, Somerset, Waldo, and York in the state of Maine as the impacts of the December 23rd – 24th storm have exceeded our available capabilities.

I have designated Peter Rogers, Director, Maine Emergency Management Agency, as the State Coordinating Officer for this request. He will work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency in damage assessments and may provide further information or justification on my behalf.

Thank you for your continuing support of the state of Maine and our citizens.

Sincerely,

Janet T. Mills
Governor

Enclosures

OMB Control No. 1660-0009/FEMA Form 010-0-13
Enclosure B: Supplemental Information for Public Assistance
Additional Supporting Documentation: NWS Weather Event Report_12.23.2022-12.24.2022